

# The Austin Fire Department

*“Our Mission Goes Beyond Our Name”*



## 2011 Accomplishments

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# Austin Fire Department

## 2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### **I. Strategic Ventures Enhance Regional Response**

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- a. ***Austin Regional Intelligence Center (ARIC):*** At the direction of the US Department of Homeland Security. Provide fire service expertise within the regional intelligence community. An AFD Captain was trained as a Terrorism Liaison Officer (TLO) and was assigned to ARIC.

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- b. ***Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF):*** To enhance the partnership within the regional intelligence community. An AFD Lieutenant Investigator was assigned to the JTTF.

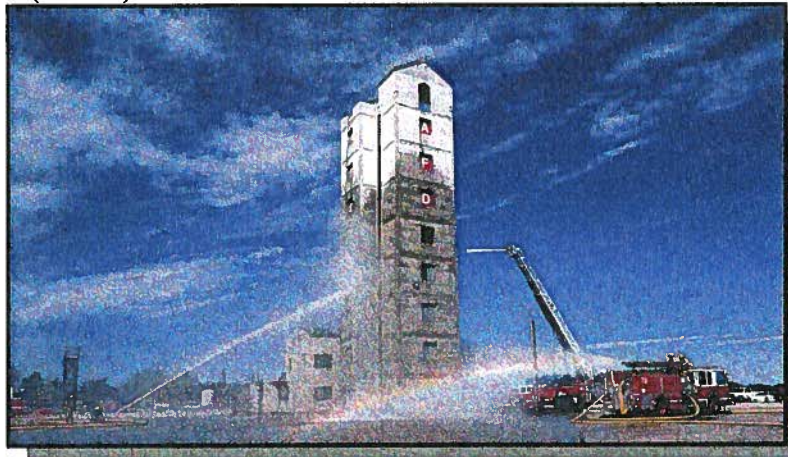
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- c. ***Emergency Services Strategic Advisory Team (ESSAT):*** To enhance partnerships with Travis County. The Chief of Staff has been assigned to the County Emergency Services Strategic Advisory Team.

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- d. ***Public Safety Training Center:*** Opened a new training academy that brings state-of-the-art technology to support the training mission. The new facility allows Fire, Police, and EMS to conduct academies simultaneously and still meet the needs of in-service training. It also provides a permanent home for the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT).

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- e. ***ESD11:*** Established Automatic Aid Agreement with ESD11.



## II. Active Wildfire Response to 2011/Future Preparations

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a. ***City of Austin Strategic Wildfire Work Group:*** This work group was approved by CMO to address the emerging wildfire problem in the wake of the 2011 wildfire season.

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b. ***Pinnacle Wildland Fire:*** Response and mitigation of this major wildfire required the response of almost every Operations unit across a three-day time period.

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c. ***Labor Day Wildland Fires:*** While primarily a County event, AFD represented up to 50 percent of the Operations companies utilized to bring these fires under control.

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d. ***Wildland Reimbursements:*** Completed our reimbursement requests for AFD's participation in the statewide wildland firefighting efforts for almost \$700,000.

## III. Improvement of Service Delivery

a. ***Medical Operations:*** Conducts quality assurance reviews in order to maintain consistent, high- quality medical service delivery to the citizens of Austin.

b. ***Battalion Medical Instructor Program (BMI):*** Keeping medical skill performance at a high level is a constant challenge. The Battalion Medical Instructor (BMI) program places medically trained instructors in each geographic battalion for the purpose of delivering hands-on training for critical medical skills. This program keeps companies in service, in their assigned response areas, while assuring that their medical skills remain sharp.

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c. ***Flu Shots:*** Delivered more than 4,400 shots to COA employees and dependents at a cost of \$7.27 per shot. This led to a total savings of \$12,000 dollars over the cost of a private contractor. The annual flu shot program is a cost- effective exercise in pandemic response that assures a constantly trained staff ready to respond in a crisis.

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d. ***Four-Person Staffing on Ladder 8 and 36:*** Increasing the staffing on these two Ladder companies will enhance service delivery to citizens. Company efficiency for these two units will be optimized.



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- e. ***Full-Time Shift Commander:*** Area-wide coordination of resources will be ensured by backfilling for the Shift Commander when they are not on duty. Notification of major events to city management officials will be ensured by having this position staffed.

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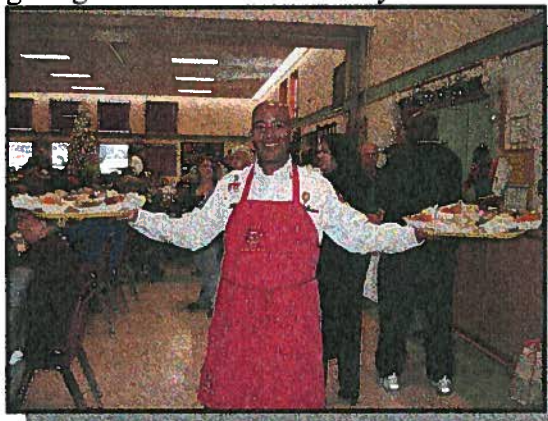
- f. ***Inspection Pre-Pay Process:*** Instituted this process (eliminating receivables), recovered more than 72 percent of total, or \$180,000, in aging receivables. Opened 111 escrow accounts (and growing) with more than \$68,000 in total current escrow account deposits. Eliminated duplicate and triplicate entries of data; streamlined scheduling and payment processes. Currently working on allowing clients to pay for services either online or over the phone by credit card or other electronic fund transfers, as well as to check the status of and make deposits into their AFD escrow accounts online.

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- g. ***Fireball Project:*** The Fireball was a project to deploy laptops out into the field with our Inspectors. This gave the Inspectors the ability to clear permits, view full, up-to-date inspection histories of properties, and allowed them several other advantages while onsite. Going paperless saved the Department the cost, storage space, and the additional work hours associated with paper, and it was also in line with our commitments to the environment and customer service.

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- h. ***Senior Holiday Luncheon:*** The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conley-Guerrero Senior Holiday Luncheon was yet again a great success; the AFD served up traditional holiday fare to more than 500 senior citizens. This event was conducted as a community service but also provided an opportunity to deliver a timely fire safety message to a very vulnerable part of our community. Members of AFD, along with other volunteers and organizations, helped in the preparation and serving of a holiday meal in the spirit of giving back to the community.





#### IV. Improved Firefighter Safety

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- a. ***Plymovents:*** In 2011, AFD completed the Diesel Exhaust Extraction System project, also known as the Plymovent system. This program was primarily funded by a FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant. The Plymovent system captures and removes diesel exhaust so that it provides a healthy work environment for firefighters.

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- b. ***Courage to be Safe:*** Initiated with the Chief Officers, this program challenges leaders to act courageously in assuring the safety of our firefighters so that “everyone goes home” at the end of their shift. We were the first fire department in Texas to complete the training.

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- c. ***Wellness Center:*** Reviewed by an independent national review team from the International Association of Firefighters and the International Association of Fire Chiefs to assure that processes and philosophies were aligned with the national Wellness Fitness Initiative.

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- d. ***Prescription Physical Training:*** Utilizing Wellness Center exercise physiologists to prescribe, coach, and assess the fitness training of the cadets was implemented with the most recent cadet class. This provides continuity from one academy to another while providing a blueprint for the cadets to remain fit throughout their careers. The expectation is that we will reduce injury and lost time over the career of a firefighter by teaching proper habits during the academy.



- e. ***Pre-fire planning maps (apartments and high-rises):*** Two significant steps were taken in 2011 to further the development of our pre-fire planning program. First, we scanned maps and compiled a database of 2300 apartment complexes. These images are now linked to a responding unit’s mobile data computer (MCD), giving personnel accurate site layouts and floor plans of large apartment complexes with numerous buildings. Second, we created very detailed, comprehensive pre-fire plans of 13 target hazard occupancies in the downtown area, which are also now linked to the responders’ MDCs as well. Both were “value-added” projects accomplished by using existing Operational resources in non-traditional roles.



## V. Improved Internal Customer Service

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- a. **Hiring Process:** After processing approximately 5,000 applicants—our largest pool ever—we hired two cadet classes totaling 84 new firefighters. One class consisted of 39 cadets with previous firefighting experience (“lateral” candidates) and the other is comprised of 45 cadets (“traditional” candidates) with no firefighting experience.
- b. **Hired OHN:** We re-structured our Workers’ Compensation section to better serve our customers. The most critical change included the hiring of an Occupational Health Nurse to serve as case manager. Since this is a recent change to our structure, we don’t yet have data to discuss results. However, our anecdotal research indicates the change has been extremely well-received by the firefighters, and has resulted in members getting back to full-duty status in a much more timely and efficient manner.
- c. **COACCC:** Members of the AFD Human Resources section created several different events to raise money for COACCC. Among these were a dodge ball tournament and “Wheel of Fortune” game. These creative ideas resulted in AFD raising \$75,000 for COACCC.

## VI. External Department Recognition

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- a. **2011 Best of Texas IT Award:** Received 2011 “Best of Texas” award, recognizing the excellence of our QlikView business discovery system. Used regularly by more than 20 percent of AFD personnel, the better availability and quality of data has led directly to improved business processes and contributes to more informed decision making. Personnel time saved compiling data has already paid back the dollar investment in this software.
- b. **Sunset Valley ISO Rating Recognition:** Went from 3/8 to 2. Estimated savings for commercial insurance is \$100,000+.
- c. **Fire Rescue magazine:** Magazine article “Numbers Spark Improvements at AFD” May 2011. Shared AFD success with our QlikView business discovery system in *Fire Rescue* magazine, a nationally distributed publication for the fire services industry. The article highlighted the use of dashboards for operational performance measurement by first-line supervisors. After first-line supervisors began seeing the near real-time reporting of key performance indicators, the Department saw significant improvements in each area: incomplete incident reports are down to near zero, compliance with firefighter continuing education increased from 92 percent to 97 percent, fire companies finish in-service inspections more timely, and the turn-out time for individual units to leave the station decreased up to 25 percent.

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**VII. Fire Department Budget**

**a. FY 2011 Budget \$126,202,312 and FY 12 Budget \$131,102,226:** The Austin Fire Department sincerely appreciates the citizens' support during the past years and we will continue to work toward becoming the best fire department in the country.



